THE SERIOUS SIDE OF FRANCO

LOOK WHO MADE ANOTHER STRANGE FILM. PAGE 19

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Alleged Rittenhouse gay bashers go to court

PAGE 06

Iggy Azalea not born a man, but if she were ...

PAGE 16

Tips for shining at your holiday work party

PAGE 27

Last goodbye

Firefighter laid to rest. Joyce Craig-Lewis, Philadelphia's first female firefighter to die in the line of duty, was laid to rest in a cemetery of heroes. PAGE 02

Female firefighters tear up during funeral services for firefighter Lt. Joyce Craig-Lewis. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

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1 NEWS

Top 3

The best of Metro.us

1 'Fantasy football: Go with Donte Moncrief, Marquess Wilson, Johnny Manziel'

2 'PHOTOS: Thousands of protesters take over city streets for "Millions March NYC"'

3 'Iggy Azalea has the best response to rumors she was born a man'

On the go

Want to read Metro on your mobile device? Get the app! All you have to do is search for Metro US in the App Store or Google Play to get all the latest in news, sports, lifestyle and entertainment for free.

Correction

In the story "Throw Away Dogs gives pups a new purpose" (12/9/14), a K-9 dog named Winchester was incorrectly identified as having been trained by Throw Away Dogs. In fact, Winchester was trained by SEPTA.

Firefighters carry the coffin of Lt. Joyce Craig-Lewis. Top: A trumpeter plays taps. Bottom: A firefighter salutes. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

Firefighter buried near another hero

Final rest. Philadelphia's first female firefighter to die in the line of duty is laid to rest near Philadelphia's first female police officer to die in the line of duty.

Quoted

Sgt. Cindy Castle (Ret.) on Officer Down memorial page:

- "Laurie, on this day, 18 years later, we still remember your sacrifice for this great city. I still remember your kindness to strangers, how dedicated you were to the citizens of the community you served. When you took a woman to PAB HQ's for an emergency protection order after your shift ended that night. I can't go over the events of Jan 2, 1996 without a deep sense of loss and regret that we couldn't do more to save your life. I know now that you are truly a special Angel of God, watching over us from above. Never Forgotten!"

Jerry Smith watched as Joyce Craig-Lewis was slowly lowered down into her final resting place.

The blustery December winds at the fallen firefighter's burial Saturday recalled another historic tragedy at which the superintendent of Ivy Hill Cemetery was present.

Smith rubbed his hands in the cold and then pointed at a hill in the distance: "We have the first female Philadelphia police officer killed in the line of duty," he said. "She was buried in a blizzard."

Craig-Lewis has company. The first female firefighter to die in the line of duty was buried in the same cemetery that 18 years earlier laid to rest Philadelphia's first female police officer killed in the line of duty.

Craig-Lewis

Smith spun back. "You could call it an honor," he said.

Craig-Lewis died fighting a West Oak Lane house fire last week at the age of 36. She left behind a 16-month-old daughter and a 16-year-old son.

Lauretha Vaird was gunned down responding to the scene of a bank robbery in Feltonville on Jan. 2, 1996. The 43-year-old left behind two sons, ages 11 and 17.

Vaird's tombstone / PROVIDED

Dave Drysdale, the cemetery's secretary treasurer, was the superintendent when Vaird was laid to rest.

"It was a sad day," he said. "It's a tragic thing. Everybody that comes in here is not real happy to see us."

A firetruck draped in black and led by a police motorcade carried Craig-Lewis' casket to the Mt. Airy cemetery from the Broad Street funeral home. She was greeted at the cemetery entrance by twin firetrucks with a movie-screen-size American flag stretched between their upright ladders.

During the ceremony, bagpipes played "Amazing Grace" and a color guard played taps.

Family and city officials huddled around a green tent, while about 100 Philadelphia firefighters formed a crowd just beyond the gravesite, shivering in the wind.

Vaird was buried on Jan. 13. The original date, scheduled for days before, was canceled because of the blizzard.

"It was snowing," Drysdale said of Jan. 13. "They were going to bring the horses out, but they couldn't because the weather was bad. They plowed the section, plowed the streets all the way down Cheltenham Avenue, curb to curb, so they could get the funeral procession in."

Smith remembers the same cold as Saturday.

"It was almost the same type of thing," Smith said. "All these cops here, the city came in and said, 'We'll bring in portable lights, we'll do whatever we have to.' It was really cold. This whole field was snow covered."

Smith chose the burial plot for Craig-Lewis near the cemetery entrance. A focal point.

Her plot sits steps away from a marble monument to the city's fallen volunteer firefighters.

The Vaird tombstone, which sits on a hill just behind Craig-Lewis, features Vaird's historical title, an outline of her badge as well as the phrase: "Devoted police officer, loving mother."

At her funeral Saturday, Craig-Lewis was regularly called a loving mother and devoted firefighter.

"Craig will probably have the same type of stone," Smith said. "That's history."

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Airport workers and their supporters stand up as City Council votes on a "labor peace" resolution. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Airport workers say organizing cause of firings

Living wage. Airport workers who tried to organize their colleagues say they were fired for their efforts.

Rashaun Jackson and Anthony Reynolds

Several employees of a Philadelphia International Airport subcontractor who were recently terminated believe they were targeted for trying to organize a union, and now they want their jobs back.

"Everyone who's getting fired had something to do with trying to get a union," said Rashaun Jackson, 28. "I was terminated due to the fact that I was involved in trying to get a union. I came to all the events, the rallies and stuff that we had."

Jackson said he was terminated last weekend from his $7.50 an hour job as a full-time cabin service agent for Prospect Airport Services, officially for "attendance."

He acknowledged he exceeded the maximum number of disciplinary "points" for attendance, but wondered why he was fired last weekend as the union organizing ramped up, and not immediately upon surpassing the limit.

Now to get by, Jackson is looking for work, applying for unemployment and living with his mother, he said.

"I'm trying to manage the little bit of money that I do have," he said.

Another Prospect employee, Anthony Reynolds, 51, is in a similar situation

"Once they found I was trying to get a union in here suddenly I was detriment," said Reynolds. A cabin cleaner who earned $7.50 an hour, Reynolds said he was terminated last weekend as well.

"They're ruining my Christmas by firing me," he said.

Reynolds was officially fired for "tardiness" but denied it was a problem, and said he hadn't missed a day of work since July. Now he is trying to get his job back and surviving with the help of "a strong support system," he said.

"It's obvious that it was because of my participation," he said. "If I was incorrigible I would have been gone long ago."

Three weeks ago, Philly employees of another airport subcontractor, Primeflight, went on strike for one day for increased wages and the right to organize.

Jackson and Reynolds believe Prospect fired them and two other employees interested in organizing to prevent similar demands from being made.

Prospect Airport Services, based in Illinois, did not respond to requests for comment on these allegations.

On Thursday, the Prospect workers testified at the City Council in support of a resolution to amend the city's lease of the airport's facilities to include language mandating "labor peace agreements" with all airlines and their subcontractors. The motion passed unanimously.

"We know about the problems you face at the airport," Councilman Wilson Goode Jr., who introduced the resolution, told the workers. "We will stand fast, we will be here for you."

SAM NEWHOUSE
@scnewhouse
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The STEADi (Study To Evaluate an Adolescent Depression Investigational drug) clinical research study is being done to find out if an investigational drug is safe and if and how well it works for adolescents who have major depressive disorder (MDD). The study will last for about 10 weeks and there will be about 9 study visits. Study participation is voluntary.

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Germantown

Six survive 'suspicious' house fire

The Fire Marshal's Office is calling a blaze that broke out on East Coulter Street around 1 a.m. "suspicious," reports say.

Five adults and one infant were saved from the home by firefighters before the fire was brought under control about 20 minutes later. A neighboring home is the site of 10 recent fire incidents, including a suspected firebombing on Dec. 1. METRO

University City

Serial rapist in custody?

James Barrett, 55, arrested Thursday as he dragged off a woman he had attacked with a bike lock, may be linked to other rapes and assaults, police said. METRO

Suspects from September gay bashing due in court

Rittenhouse. A judge will weigh charges against three accused of attacking a gay couple in September.

Kevin J. Harrigan, Kathryn Knott and Philip R. Williams / PPD

A preliminary hearing is scheduled Tuesday in the Criminal Justice Center for two men and one woman charged with the brutal beating of two gay men in Rittenhouse this fall.

Kathryn Knott, 24, Philip Williams, 24, and Kevin Harrigan, 26, all could face a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison on aggravated assault charges for the Sept. 11 attack that left one victim requiring surgery to have his jaw wired shut.

"The victims and their families are still emotionally recovering from the attack, that will be a long process," said Caryn Kunkle, a friend and spokesman for the 27- and 28-year-old victims, who have requested to remain anonymous.

Quoted

"Physically they are almost healed, but have visible scars. It is sad." Kunkle

The two men, a gay couple, were walking near 16th and Chancellor streets around 10:45 p.m. on Sept. 11 when they encountered a group of about 15 people. Police said one of the group asked the pair, "Are you gay?"

When the men said yes, a fight reportedly broke out.

The victims have said multiple members of the group attacked them.

But defense attorneys for the three defendants have countered that one of the victims initiated the brawl by striking a woman in the group.

One victim required surgery and had his jaw wired shut due fractures and deep lacerations to his face.

As the story went viral social media users identified a group of individuals resembling suspects seen in police surveillance footage.

One individual, a coach at a Catholic high school, was terminated from his position for suspected involvement, but was never charged.

The three defendants were charged two weeks after the attack.

Kunkle said the victims will not attend the preliminary hearing, at which a judge will decide whether charges against the defendants should be upheld.

"They are totally dependent on the system now," she said. "Very stressful for them because lots of lawyers, anger, persecution from the other side, etc.."

Kunkle also said the victims are waiting to see if the other members of the group that attacked them will face charges.

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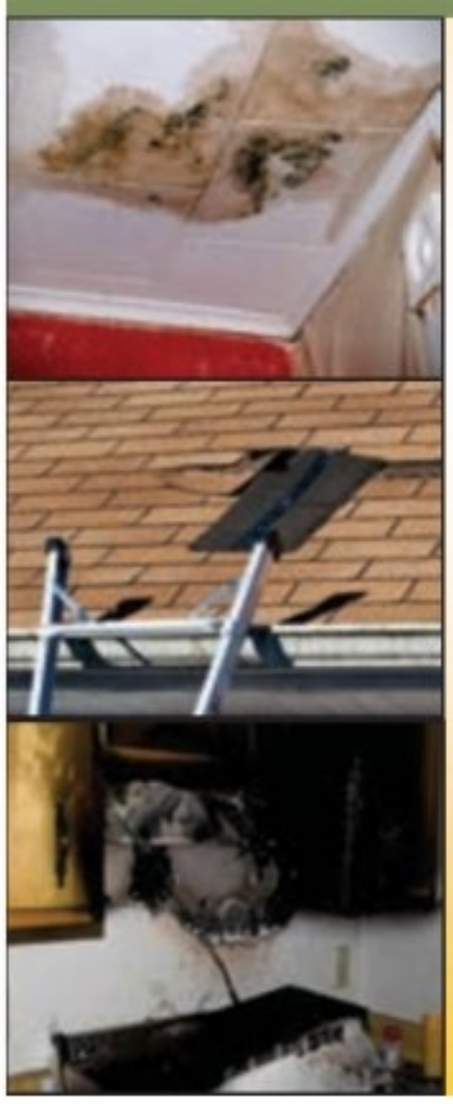
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Philadelphia

Facing 418 years, Fattah Jr. will represent himself

Chaka Fattah Jr. was granted permission by a federal judge to act as his own attorney in court Friday, even after a judge advised him that the move was "unwise."

"In my opinion, a trained lawyer would defend you far better than you may defend yourself," Judge Harvey Bartle III said.

Chaka Fattah Jr. / PROVIDED

Fattah Jr., son of Congressman Chaka Fattah, was charged with a 23-count federal indictment, including fraud and tax evasion in August. The indictment alleges that while working as a consultant, he overbilled a charter school that was receiving funds from the city and state.

If convicted of all counts and sentenced consecutively, Fattah Jr. would face a sentence of 418 years.

"I'm ready to deal with these charges head-on," Fattah Jr. said. "I remain confident of my innocence of these charges."

SAM NEWHOUSE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
PHILADELPHIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) is a participant in the Moving to Work Demonstration Program (MTW). PHA was initially selected to participate in the MTW Program in 2001. In October 2008, PHA entered into an Amended and Restated Moving to Work Agreement (MTW Agreement) with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which has subsequently been further amended.

The MTW Agreement defines the terms and conditions under which PHA is a participant in the MTW Program. The MTW Agreement requires that PHA submit an MTW Annual Plan for HUD review and approval. PHA is seeking public review and comments on the proposed FY 2016 MTW Annual Plan. The Annual Plan describes PHA's MTW proposed policy initiatives and activities for the period from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016. PHA is also soliciting public comments on its Strategic Directions Plan which identifies strategic goals and initiatives for the five year period beginning in 2015.

Additional information regarding the proposed Annual Plan and Strategic Directions Plan are available for public review on PHA's website at **www.pha.phila.gov** under the "Latest News" section or may be picked up at the following locations:

Scattered Sites Management Offices:
4445 Holden Street
2500 Jackson Street
3226 McMichael Street
2411 N. 11th Street
715 Brandywine Street

Public Housing Management Offices:
Bartram - 5404 Gibson Drive
Wilson Park - 2500 Jackson Street
Raymond Rosen - 2301 W. Edgley Street
Blumberg - 2311 W. Jefferson Street

Housing Choice Voucher Program Office:
2850 Germantown Avenue 1st Floor

PHA residents, Housing Choice Voucher participants, and the general public may attend and provide comments at the Public Hearing and/or submit written comments on these proposed actions any time during the comment period.

The Public Hearing is scheduled for December 1, 2014, from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. at the John F. Street Center, 1100 Poplar Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123, Multipurpose Room

Only comments pertaining to the proposed actions noted above are being solicited. The comment period begins on November 17, 2014 at noon and ends December 17, 2014 at noon. All comments must be received by the end of the comment period. **Please send your written comments to: Philadelphia Housing Authority, Office of Policy, Research and Enterprise Planning, Attention: MTW Comments / Strategic Directions Plan, 12 S. 23rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103**

The Public Hearing is being held in an accessible location. If you require assistance, sign language interpreter, or other accommodations, please call 215-684-4000. Please use the AT&T Relay Service for TTY.

Philadelphia Housing Authority

Company to tighten screws on air bag parts supplier

Stephanie Erdman of Destin, Florida, who was seriously injured by the airbag explosion in her Honda Civic last year, testifies during a hearing before the Senate. / GETTY IMAGES

Danger. Takata's exploding air bags have caused deaths and a recall of more than 20 million vehicles globally.

Takata Corp., has begun enforcing tighter quality controls on a group of parts suppliers as the auto safety equipment maker boosts production to replace millions of air bags recalled for a potentially deadly defect, according to people involved.

Takata has come under investigation by U.S. safety regulators and federal prosecutors, and intense scrutiny from U.S. lawmakers.

Over the last two months, the company has launched a series of "urgent" inspections across its supply network and dispatched managers to parts makers in Japan and Asia to announce the changes, according to those involved, who asked not to be identified.

At one closed-door meeting in Japan between Takata executives and over 100 of its suppliers in mid-October, Takata said its representatives would inspect 40 suppliers of key parts before the end of the year and audit the remainder of the firms in 2015, one of those involved said.

Suppliers said the way the inspections were carried out did not differ much from regular quality checks made by Takata, but they highlighted the speed and the unusual sense of urgency with which they have been announced.

"This time it was different. This inspection had not been planned before and was announced out of the blue during the meeting," said the person involved. "They came to my factory within one, two weeks from setting the date," said the person.

Takata spokesman Toyohiro Hishikawa declined to comment on the company's dealings with its suppliers. REUTERS

Takata

Fast facts about the company:

- Takata has 55 factories
- There are factories in 20 countries
- Five of the factories are located in Japan
- The only facility that makes air bags in Japan is a plant in Kyushu in southern Japan.

Quoted

"Takata has become extremely strict when it comes to quality control now."

One of the people who was present at the meeting.

Deaths

5

The five deaths were linked to Takata air bags in Honda Motor Co. vehicles, while the recalls around the world affected a wide range of carmakers.

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Sweden. Russian military jet in near collision with jetliner

A Russian military jet nearly collided with a commercial passenger airplane in international airspace near southern Sweden on Friday, Swedish authorities said, but Russia insisted its jet had kept at a safe distance.

Passenger flight SK1755, operated by a unit of Scandinavian airline service SAS from the Danish capital Copenhagen to Poznan in Poland, was diverted by Swedish authorities before a collision occurred, the authorities said.

But Russia's Defence Ministry on Sunday denied its plane had come close to colliding with a civilian airliner, official news agency TASS reported.

"A flight was carried out in strict accordance with international rules on air space and did not violate the borders of other countries and was at a safe distance from the flight paths of civilian airplanes," Defence Ministry spokesman General Major Igor Konashenko was quoted as saying.

Relations between Russia and the West have soured in recent months over Moscow's role in the conflict in Ukraine. Many countries have cited suspected displays of Russian military prowess. **REUTERS**

Scandinavian airline service plane / REUTERS

Troubled skies

400

NATO warplanes have had to scramble 400 times this year in response to increased Russian air activity around Europe.

Washington undecided on UN resolution for Israel-Palestine dispute

UN Security Council

15

Jordan has circulated a draft Palestinian resolution to the 15-member United Nations Security Council calling for Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory to end by November 2016.

A Palestinian protester uses a slingshot to throw back a tear gas canister fired by Israeli soldiers / REUTERS

Secretary of State. John Kerry will be in Europe today to meet with officials from both sides.

Israel said it hoped the United States would veto any moves at the United Nations to set a time frame for its withdrawal from territory Palestinians seek for state, but a senior U.S. official said it was too early to say.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry will meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Rome on Monday to discuss various proposals for a Palestinian state that are circulating at the United Nations.

Later on Monday, Kerry will travel to Paris for talks with European counterparts and then on to London to meet Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat and a delegation from the Arab League, who will urge the United States not to use its U.N. Security Council veto to block the proposals.

The hastily arranged meetings suggested urgency in America's drive to manage efforts among Security Council members to draft a new proposal before Israeli elections in March. Kerry said on Friday he wanted to defuse tensions during the talks.

In Jerusalem, violence has surged in recent weeks because of a dispute over access to a holy site in an Israeli-annexed part of the city. **REUTERS**

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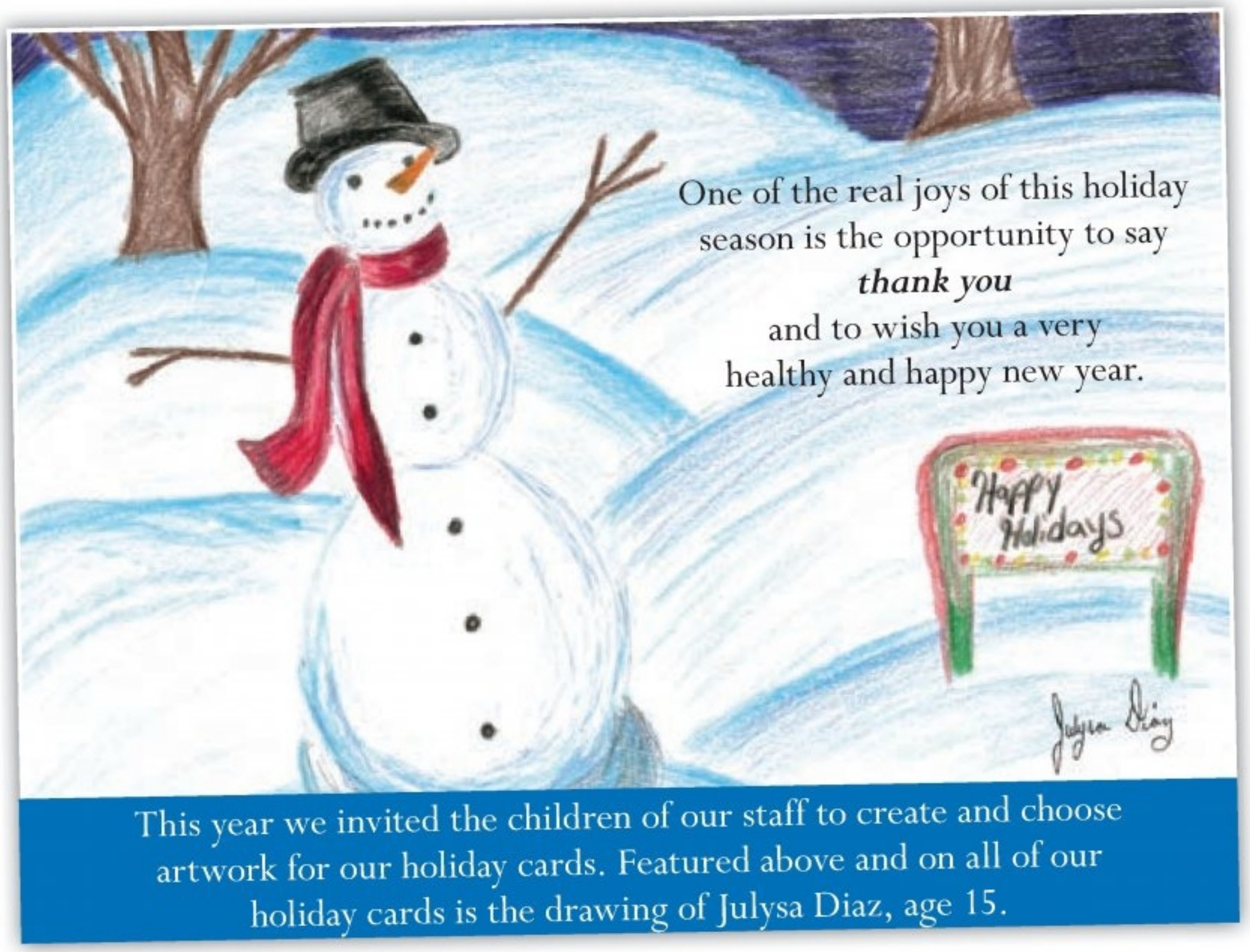
One of the real joys of this holiday season is the opportunity to say
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and to wish you a very healthy and happy new year.
Happy Holidays
Julysa Diaz

This year we invited the children of our staff to create and choose artwork for our holiday cards. Featured above and on all of our holiday cards is the drawing of Julysa Diaz, age 15.

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Thanks to all of our artists for their submissions!

Julysa, 15

Madeline, 5

Marcus, 9

Que, 4 and Kyrie, 2

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Sophia, 12

Abby, 5

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Auburn University

Football player shot dead near Ala. campus

An 18-year-old Auburn University football player was shot dead early on Sunday at an apartment complex near his campus in eastern Alabama, police said.

Jakell Mitchell, from Opelika, Alabama, was found wounded shortly after midnight and died later in hospital, said police captain Will Mathews.

Three men, including two former Auburn football players, were shot dead at a party at the same apartment complex in 2012, news website AL.com reported. REUTERS

JAKELL MITCHELL /TWITTER

El Paso resident

American enters N. Korea to denounce threat from US

An American citizen who illegally entered North Korea gave a rambling diatribe criticizing the U.S. and praising his host as a great nation and Socialist success story.

Arturo Pierre Martinez said he was a 29-year-old from El Paso, Texas, and had "taken up a risky journey" to North Korea to "pass along some very valuable and disturbing information" to help the country defend itself from the "imminent threat" posed by the U.S. government. BLOOMBERG

ARTURO PIERRE MARTINEZ /REUTERS

Families of victims in Newtown plan lawsuits

Sandy Hook school shooting. The wrongful death suits do not yet have a target.

A woman kneels in front of bells, which were being rung outside of St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown, Connecticut, yesterday. / REUTERS

Parents of almost half the young children killed by a gunman at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, two years ago on Sunday have taken initial steps toward filing lawsuits tied to one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history.

The parents of eight of the children killed in the Dec. 14, 2012, carnage, which 20-year-old gunman Adam Lanza ended by shooting himself dead as he heard police sirens approach, have notified Connecticut courts that they may file wrongful death lawsuits in state or federal court.

Their initial court filings, related to legal entities created in memory of their children, do not indicate who the families could target in their lawsuits, according to a chief court clerk for North Fairfield County Probate Court.

While the parents could not be reached for comment, a spokesman for Bridgeport law firm Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder said that a lawyer at the firm had recently met with some of the Newtown parents about potential suits.

"Attorney Josh Koskoff has met with parents about legal action," said Geraldo Parrilla, a legal assistant with the firm.

While Newtown grabbed the nation's attention, school shootings remain common across the United States. Some 95 incidents, including fatal and nonfatal assaults, suicides and unintentional shootings have taken place across 33 states since Newtown, according to Everytown for Gun Safety, a group created by the merger of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, founded by former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, a group founded after the attack. REUTERS

Quoted

"There is no other developed country that would tolerate this kind of gun violence around school age children."

Shannon Watts founder of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

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Death toll rises in Indonesia mudslide

Indonesia. Mudslides are common in the region during monsoon season, which usually runs until April.

Villagers dig out a motorcycle buried in the mud after a landslide hit the village of Sampang in Banjarnegara. / REUTERS

Indonesian rescuers on Sunday used heavy-lifting equipment for the first time to clear roads leading to the site of a landslide that destroyed a village and killed at least 32 people, officials said, with scores still missing.

Police, soldiers and volunteers had used their bare hands and makeshift tools to search for survivors, while trucks cleared roads leading to the landslide area after the disaster struck on Friday night.

Hundreds have been evacuated from around Jemblung village in the Banjarnegara district of Central Java, about 280 miles from the capital, Jakarta, where media pictures showed a flood of mud and water cascading down a wooded mountainside.

Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman for the National Disaster Mitigation Agency, said 32 people had been killed and 577 people from the surrounding areas had been taken to temporary shelters. There were 2,000 rescuers involved in the operation on Sunday, he said. REUTERS

Missing
76
The National Disaster Mitigation said 76 people were missing.

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Actor. Cosby praises wife, disparages media in newspaper interview

Comedian Bill Cosby, besieged by a wave of sexual misconduct allegations, has praised his wife for supporting him and criticized the media for its coverage of a scandal that has already compromised his career.

Cosby, once a revered father figure and a forceful advocate of self-help for his fellow African Americans, made the remarks in a rare telephone interview with the New York Post, which published them on its website late on Saturday.

More than a dozen women have stepped forward to accuse Cosby of giving them alcohol or drugs and then sexually assaulting them in incidents that go back decades.

In the Post's telephone interview, Cosby was asked how his wife of 50 years, Camille Cosby, was holding up amid the controversy.

"Love and the strength of womanhood," he said. "Let me say it again, love and the strength of womanhood. And, you could reverse it, the strength of womanhood and love." REUTERS

Bill Cosby and wife Camille in 2006. / GETTY IMAGES

Quoted
"I only expect the black media to uphold the standards of excellence in journalism and when you do that you have to go in with a neutral mind."
Cosby in the Post's telephone interview

Jingle beards are in for the holidays

Men's fashion

Deck your facial hair with baubles

For the hirsute hipster, 'tis the season — to wear Christmas baubles in your beard. The colorful facial hair ornaments, created by advertising agency Grey London, are being sold online, with all proceeds going towards Beard Season, a charity against skin cancer in Australia, where melanoma kills more young people than any other cancer.

Inspiration

It started with a Christmas card

Creative pair Mike Kennedy and Pauline Ashford first came up with the idea of baubles on beards as the image for a Christmas card to send to their company's clients, with the brief being: "Do something famous or do something good — ideally both." The follicle furnishings proved to be so popular that the duo turned them into a gift idea. METRO WORLD NEWS

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2

CULTURE

Twitter feed

Today, Jaden Smith is all about pleasing the ladies, Whitney Cummings knows how to read people, Kelly Osbourne went to Taylor Swift's birthday party and you didn't, Liam Payne wants his fans to know they're missing out and Billy Eichner has a programming question.

@officialjaden: I Just Like Showing Pretty Girls A Good Time Weather I'm Physically There Or Not Doesn't Matter.

@WhitneyCummings: The way you pronounce Au Bon Pain tells me everything I need to know about you

@KellyOsbourne: Thank you again @taylorswift for throwing one of the best parties I have ever been to! I hope you had the best birthday ever!!!!!

@Real_Liam_Payne: Car singing is the best singing

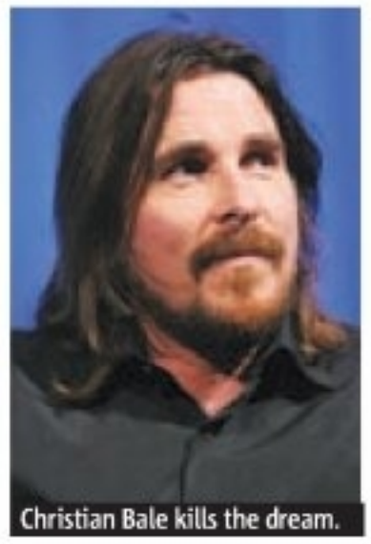
@billyeichner: So in January will the Hallmark channel transition from round the clock Christmas movies to its Martin Luther King movies?

1 Iggy Azalea has the best response to rumors she was born a man

ALL IMAGES GETTY IMAGES

Some stars just ignore all the weird rumors that go around about them, some offer firm but boilerplate denials and every once in a great while, some find just the right way to brush off the gossip while coming off as awesome in the process. Case in point? Iggy Azalea actually deigned to respond to bizarre rumors that she wasn't always a girl named Iggy: "Wait, so I'm just now reading that I was born a man and my name is Cody?" she posted to Twitter, following up with, "I just don't see myself as a Cody. I'm more of a Liam, if I had a penis." You win this round of the Internet, Ms. Azalea.

2 Christian Bale poo-poos fans' 'Dark Knight Rises' theory



Christian Bale kills the dream.

You know who's a good authority about Christopher Nolan's Batman films? Bruce Wayne himself, Christian Bale, who is happy to set people straight about some of their wilder theories. For instance, there are apparently some fans who believe the ending of "Dark Knight Rises," in which Michael Caine's Alfred sees Bruce Wayne alive and well in Florence, is all a dream. Well, Bale says you're wrong. "That was for real," Bale says during an Entertainment Weekly radio chat. "I find it very interesting. With most films, I tend to always say it's what the audience thinks it is, but my personal opinion is that no, it was not a dream." OK, fine, but what about the ending of "Newsies"? Totally a dream sequence, right?

3 Hayden Panettiere pops out a daughter

"Nashville" star Hayden Panettiere has a baby girl just in time for Christmas. The pint-sized actress gave birth to daughter Kaya Evdokia Klitschko last week, her first child with much taller fiance Wladimir Klitschko, her rep confirms to People magazine. "We are over the moon and madly in love," the new parents say in a statement.

Panettiere and Klitschko announced their engagement in October. No word yet on whether baby Kaya will take after the taller or the shorter side of the family.

4 Zoe Saldana's family just doubled in size

Speaking of celebrity births, "Guardians of the Galaxy" star and "ecstatic" new mom Zoe Saldana gave birth to twins last week, as reported by the Daily Mirror. The babies — rumored to be twin boys — mark the first children for Saldana and husband Marco Perego. "Zoe and Marco are delighted. Zoe has been ready to drop for some time, and they are both ecstatic to be meeting the twins," a source with a penchant for over-sharing tells the newspaper. Seriously, "ready to drop for some time"? Come on, man, there are more tactful ways to say that.

Daily video

NBC

The Office: Middle Earth edition

Just in time for "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies," this week's "Saturday Night Live" host, Martin Freeman, gets two of his most famous roles mashed up together by casting the characters of J.R.R. Tolkein's classic tales in the U.K. version of "The Office," where Freeman first rose to prominence. "What have I been up to? I went on a quest, saved Middle Earth, did the noble thing and turned down loads of treasure. Yeah, so the brave hobbit Bilbo Baggins now works at a paper company," he explains in the intro. "And I drive a Jetta." The Gandalf version of Ricky Gervais' David Brent is pretty spectacular. And apparently sometimes there are giant spiders in the parking lot.

Now you can get high on the Queen's supply

During "The Queen's Garden," a TV special set to air in the U.K. at Christmas, horticulturist Alan Titchmarsh apparently stumbled upon some magic mushrooms in the gardens of Buckingham Palace. "It's eaten in some cultures for its hallucinogenic effects, but it also makes people who eat it very sick," an ecology professor explains to Titchmarsh, according to the Telegraph. "The old-fashioned thing to do was to feed it to the village idiot, then drink his urine because you get all of the high without any of the sickness." Well then!

But don't get too excited about any Royal Family vision quests just yet. A Palace spokesman was quick to tell the Sun that "fungi from the garden are not used in the Palace kitchen." But man, if they were? That could really liven up the Queen's Christmas Day address. Oh well. Instead, maybe some commoners can sneak in, chow down on the mushrooms and have a great time saying Titchmarsh's name over and over again.

Titchmarsh and the Queen head off to find the village idiot.

THE WORD

Ned Ehrbar takes on the world of gossip.

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Get schooled by the Science Guy

Onstage. Bill Nye breaks down "the most important idea."

Last February, Bill Nye became the public face of the theory of evolution when he controversially debated creationist Ken Ham at the Creation Museum in Kentucky. The biggest challenge, he says now, was not in making his argument in front of a largely hostile audience: "The most difficult part of that debate in Kentucky was doing my best to keep my jaw closed."

Nye is continuing to educate people on evolution with his new book, "Undeniable: Evolution and the Science of Creation," although he rejects the mantle of Darwinian defender. "I would prefer not to call it defending evolution so much as spelling it out," he says. "I consider the book a primer on evolution. There's a bunch of fundamental things that I cannot help but notice that many of my fellow citizens are unaware of.

"This is the most important idea in all of biology."

Evolution is only one of the topics that Nye will discuss when he takes the Merriam Theater stage on Tuesday for a multimedia presentation and Q&A session that he refers to as a "stand-up comedy science routine." He'll also point out the facts supporting climate change, an equally embattled subject in the popular imagination at the moment.

As serious as he is about these topics, however, Nye promises to approach his performance with the dry sense of humor audiences are familiar with from his bow-tied, public persona, saying, "I try to be funny as well as funny-looking."

BILL NYE'S NEW BOOK, "UNDENIABLE: EVOLUTION AND THE SCIENCE OF CREATION," IS OUT NOW. / PROVIDED

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Bill Nye, The Science Guy

Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m.
Merriam Theater
250 S. Broad St.
$35-$75, 215-893-1999
www.kimmelcenter.org

Quoted

"I consider the book a primer on evolution. There's a bunch of fundamental things that I cannot help but notice that many of my fellow citizens are unaware of. This is the most important idea in all of biology." Nye, on his new book

The basics

In the right boat

Long associated with science education thanks to his 1990s PBS series "Bill Nye, The Science Guy," Nye says that while he hopes a general audience will be receptive to his message, children are his target demographic.

"We don't want to raise a generation of young people unfamiliar with the fundamental idea in all life science. If you're indoctrinated that the Earth could somehow be 6,000 years old before you're 10, it's a really hard thing to overcome. Ask anybody raised with this extraordinary worldview, and they'll tell you how hard it is to stop believing when your ancestors and everyone you go to school with is in the same wrong boat."

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Box office. So-so financial returns plague the big Moses movie 'Exodus: Gods and Kings'

It didn't rain too much cash money on "Exodus," starring Joel Edgerton. / KERRY BROWN

After an entire weekend with no real new movies to see, Hollywood finally woke up and gave America two. And yet audiences still largely stayed home. Yes, "Exodus: Gods and Kings" — a full-on biblical epic on the tale of Moses (Christian Bale) — bumped "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 1" from its hold on the top of the box office. But it only scared up $24.5 million — not so hot considering the budget was somewhere around $140 million.

In addition to modest returns, "Exodus" also presently stands at a weak 28 percent on Rotten Tomatoes and a B- from Cinemascore, which tallies audience responses. None of this bodes well with the final "Hobbit" poised to eat up box office bucks.

Longtime box office champ "Mockingjay" still held on at $13.2 million, which brought its total to $277.4 million. It's still going semi-strong, but it's highly unlikely it will get anywhere close to the $424 million predecessor "Catching Fire" netted last year.

Top 5 earners

1. 'Exodus: Gods and Kings' $24.5 million
2. 'The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 1' $13.2 million
3. 'Penguins of Madagascar' $7.3 million
4. 'Top Five' $7.2 million
5. 'Big Hero 6' $6.1 million

The weekend's other major new release, Chris Rock's "Top Five," opened at only number four, with a mere $7.2 million in returns — this despite glowing reviews. It did great for its budget of $5 million, though it was sold to Paramount for a steep $12 million, who perhaps expected bigger fanfare. Perhaps it will have word-of-mouth staying power.

Elsewhere, "Penguins of Madagascar" narrowly beat "Top Five" with $7.3 million, for the third spot, while "Big Hero 6" grabbed fifth with $6.1 million.

In limited release, "Inherent Vice" — Paul Thomas Anderson's dare-devil Thomas Pynchon adaptation, starring Joaquin Phoenix — had a huge debut, raking in $330,000 from only six theaters for a potent $66,000 per screen average. We'll see how the 2 1/2 hour comedy does when it goes wide in January. MATT PRIGGE

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Q&A JAMES FRANCO ON TEACHING AND FILM

Interview. The actor-director-artist somehow found time to teach and get his students to make "The Color of Time."

James Franco plays a C.K. Williams-like poet in the grad student-made "The Color of Time," now in theaters and on VOD. / STARZ DIGITAL MEDIA

There's James Franco, entertainer, and James Franco, artist. While he has a new, possibly world-destroying comedy en route Christmas Day — the North Korea-set "The Interview" — he's also busy promoting "The Color of Time," his latest experimental film. While teaching a graduate-level course in filmmaking at NYU, he tasked his 12 students with collaborating on a film based on C.K. Williams' poems. That's not all: He gave them name actors, including Jessica Chastain, Mila Kunis and Zach Braff, plus himself.

What initially motivated you to make this a project for students in your class?

This was a way to bridge worlds — to have students work with experienced, A-list actors and have a real filmmaking experience. I'm really about collaboration, whether it's with people more experienced than I am or less experienced. I liked being free of the commercial concerns that are present in professional filmmaking.

What made you think C.K. Williams' poems would lend well to film?

His poems — or at least these poems [in the book "Tar"] — are very narrative-based. They all center on a central figure, who we interpreted as Williams looking back on moments in his life. That gave us a structure, a character at the center.

JAMES FRANCO
WIREIMAGE

What I like about these poems is they aren't just about memory; a lot of them are universal. They're about coming of age, being in a relationship, having jobs. But they're seen through a poet's eyes.

How did the students react to suddenly having to direct A-list actors?

One thing I saw happening in some student films was a lack of sense of how much they needed to direct actors. They work with young actors or inexperienced actors, so they have to direct them more than usual. When you work with experienced actors you don't have to do that much. They know what they're doing. For the experienced actors, it was great to go back to a film set where people were still doing it from a very pure place. They were so in love and so in awe of just making a movie that the experienced actors could just go on set and not have to worry about anything but doing their art. No agents, no money deals — just this. They all said it was great.

MATT PRIGGE
@mattprigge
matt.prigge@metro.us

Both sides

Two-faced

You're constantly jumping between big films and your own experimental projects.

This project was shot at the same time as "Oz the Great and Powerful" — one of the most expensive movies ever made. When you're spending that much money, you don't want to experiment with form or get too artistic in a daring way. With "The Color of Time," we didn't have huge budgets. We had the freedom to try new things, like getting a bunch of directors to make a unified movie.

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TV watch list

DRAMA

'Hart of Dixie'

Zoe is happy that Wade is sticking around town, but he doesn't notice her romantic gestures, while Lavon and George fight for Lemon. **SEASON PREMIERE, 8 P.M., CW**

COMEDY

'2 Broke Girls'

Caroline and Max need money for something new this week: T-shirts to promote their cupcake store. Selling cupcakes gets more and more complicated, doesn't it? **8 P.M., CBS**

AWARDS

American Country Countdown Awards

Tis the season of award shows, and if you like country music, this is the one for you: Kenny Chesney is getting a big award and Miranda Lambert is set to perform. **8 P.M., FOX LISA WEIDENFELD**

On "Hart of Dixie," nothing says romance like a tractor. / PATRICK WYMORE, THE CW

Katherine McPhee: From "Smash" to "Scorpion"

Interview. If TV was high school, actress just ditched glee club to become a mathlete.

Catch "Scorpion" Mondays at 9 p.m. on CBS. / NEIL JACOBS, CBS

If you're a "Smash" fan still smarting from the demise of the musical drama, Katherine McPhee wants you to know that you're not alone. "I still run into quite a few people who are still quite heartbroken about 'Smash' being no longer on," McPhee says. "They have to sort of recover. I have to give them their time to get over it."

But McPhee herself has moved on to "Scorpion," a new series about a think tank of eccentric geniuses helping the Homeland Security combat high-tech threats. McPhee stars as Paige Dineen, who's tasked with helping the brainiacs interact with everyday people.

The series is inspired by the life of Scorpion Computer Services CEO Walter O'Brien, a computer prodigy who serves as executive producer for the series. (On the show, he's played by Elyes Gabel). And McPhee says having O'Brien around has enriched her life in ways she wasn't expecting.

"He is incapable of simply just being, I guess, normal. He is constantly just trying to figure out how to solve problems and solve people's issues," she says. "At an afternoon barbecue that our writers threw, I said, 'Yeah, I don't know what new car I want to get. My lease is up soon in, you know, like this spring or something.' And he literally just started to strategically lay out my options and what would be the best option for me to help me understand what I really wanted and what I was really looking for, because I wasn't even really aware of what I wanted to get out of a car. And basically at the end of it I was like, 'OK, cool, so this is the car I want,' and he was like, 'Yeah, pretty much.'"

KATHERINE MCPHEE
GETTY IMAGES

Despite the show being about some very smart people, McPhee herself insists she's pretty far from a brainiac. "I was terrible in school, but I do actually love statistics," she says. "I like statistics because I think they make you sound smart. Statistics. Just saying statistics sounds very intelligent, doesn't it?"

Live music

Kat McPhee, songstress

Given her rise to fame on "American Idol" and her work on the Broadway-based drama "Smash," it's not hard to believe that Katherine McPhee would often be up for belting out a tune. And apparently she's more prone to singing than even she's aware herself. "It's nice to have Kat McPhee on set," her "Scorpion" co-star Eddie Kaye Thomas says. "She doesn't realize how much she sings, and it's really nice when it gets really late to hear her just casually singing a song. Last night she was singing love songs to her Chihuahua." Sounds delightful.

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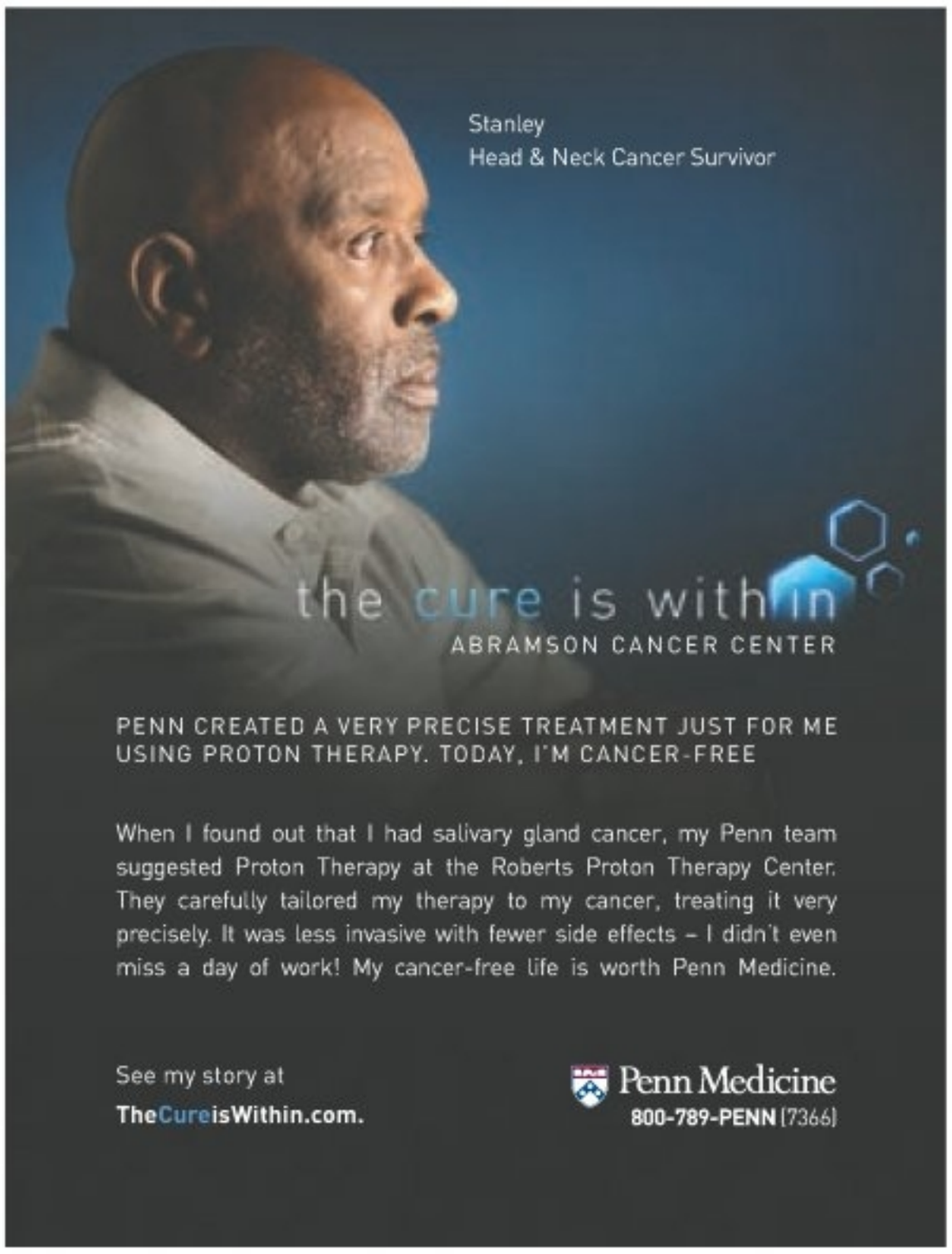
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Taking the road way less traveled

Interview. Singer Alex Clare has technology giant Microsoft to thank for his unexpected wave of success.

There are all sorts of paths to success in the music industry (and many more that don't lead to success, of course). But Alex Clare might have taken one of the more unexpected routes.

The British singer/songwriter's 2012 album, a soul/electronic hybrid called "The Lateness of the Hour," was not selling. In fact, it did so poorly that his label dropped him, and Clare, a religious Jew, headed to a yeshiva (seminary for Jews) in Jerusalem. But somewhere along the way, someone handed his album to the right person at Microsoft, and the company created a wildly successful ad spot using Clare's song "Too Close." Trust us, you've heard it. The song, a pulsing, almost unsettling ode to a relationship gone wrong, soared up the charts.

"I set some conditions for leaving yeshiva. One of them was that my song would go to the top 5 in the U.K. and the other one was that my producer would phone me," says Clare. "I spoke to the head of yeshiva and told him these two things happened and he was like, 'Yeah, dude, you should probably go take care of that.'"

Probably not the usual set of reasons for leaving that a man who runs a yeshiva hears, but Clare is good-natured about what happened, calling the last-minute save of his music career part of "the grand cosmic plan."

"The only person who bought my record was the guy who gave it to Microsoft to use," he says. "They just liked it. They liked the energy. They thought it was in keeping with what they tried to do."

Clare is now back with a new album, "Three Hearts," which covers slightly new ground. The singer got married and had a baby in between records, which he called "massively" influential.

The new album also takes a more instrumental turn compared to the electronic "Lateness of the Hour." "I always played in bands and I like musical instruments," says Clare with a laugh. "It gets a bit dull after a while making music on laptops and using samples."

Quoted

"The only person who bought my record was the guy who gave it to Microsoft to use. They just liked it. They liked the energy."

Clare, on the song "Too Close"

See Alex Clare on Wednesday at the Theatre of Living Arts. Tickets are $20. Go to Ticketmaster.com for more details. / DAN MEDHURST

Singing style

Right in the kishkes

Clare says his main influences are soul singers, a style of music he grew up listening to. "They're the only things I really listen to now" Clare says. "If I've got my iPod on, I don't tend to listen to that much new music. I tend to listen to oldies. Marvin Gaye, Donny Hathaway, Stevie [Wonder], they're all still up there." As to what draws a modern singer to such an old song, Clare says, "It just feels good. It's not just about listening to music — it's about feeling it. With a lot of soul music, it just gets you in the kishkes."

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AMAZING
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Encouraging Study on TYPE II DIABETES Shows the disease CAN BEGIN TO BE REVERSED in as little as 1 WEEK!

A free guide has just been made available to Type II Diabetics detailing an approach that appears to be more powerful than any drug know to modern science. The free diabetic guide explains in plain English how many diabetics have been able to reduce and eliminate their drugs and insulin injections, lose weight without exercise, reduce and eliminate the risk for diabetic complications, restore pancreatic function, and even become non-diabetic. The free guide also reveals rarely used diagnostic testing that is helping doctors understand potential causes of diabetes beyond weight gain, genetics and lack of exercise.

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2014's top pop culture moments

Trending. Take a look back at the year's biggest celeb stories.

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1 #BreaktheInternet

Hashtag or no hashtag, I just checked and the Internet remains safely unbroken. But that doesn't mean this image of Kim Kardashian's physics-defying derriere hasn't broken something deep inside of me. Could be my spirit, could be my brain, tough to say. But while Ms. Kardashian may not have broken the Internet, she did successfully sear this image into our collective cultural brain. So ... good job? But do you think the designer of that dress was saddened that we all assumed it was a trash bag at first?

PAPER MAGAZINE

2 The ultimate Oscar selfie

TWITTER / @THEELLENSHOW

Speaking of breaking the Internet, that's what Academy Awards host Ellen DeGeneres claimed she was trying to do with her star-studded selfie taken during the telecast — or at least she was trying to break Twitter. And DeGeneres' efforts were much more successful than Kardashian's, with the candid photo of DeGeneres along with Jennifer Lawrence, Channing Tatum, Meryl Streep, Julia Roberts, Bradley Cooper, Kevin Spacey, Brad Pitt, Lupita Nyong'o, the brother of Lupita Nyong'o and part of Jared Leto becoming the most retweeted photo ever.

3 Elevator fight

May 5, 2014: The surveillance footage seen 'round the world. On their way out of a Met Gala after-party, Solange Knowles lunges past sister Beyonce to unleash hell on brother-in-law Jay Z — and TMZ got its hands on the footage. Sadly, much like the rumors of marital strife that swirled around Beyonce and Jay Z all summer, this slap-fight heard 'round the world may have been faked solely to boost ticket sales for their tour.

GETTY IMAGES

4 Justin Bieber's mug shot

GETTY IMAGES

After starting off 2014 with this glassy-eyed mug shot after he was arrested for drag racing, driving under the influence and whiningly resisting arrest, Justin Bieber managed to make it out of 2014 unscathed — well, pretty much. He's still juggling multiple pending court cases for a DUI, assaulting a driver and egging his neighbor's house.

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YOUTUBE / ADULT SWIM

Too many cooks

Finally recovering from the absurd, sinister, TV-inspired trip that was the warped "Adult Swim" viral hit "Too Many Cooks"? Time to fire it up again. There's probably a detail or two you missed, anyway. For instance, can you spot the very first appearance of machete-wielding madman Bill? Look carefully. The blend of '80s TV nostalgia, absurdism and blood-curdling terror became a beautiful pop culture stew to be savored again and again. Team Smarf forever.

GETTY IMAGES

I'm not famous anymore/#IamSorry

Professionally, 2014 was a mixed bag for Shia LaBeouf. While his full-frontal work in Lars Von Trier's two-part "Nymphomaniac" didn't generate much excitement, his WWII tank drama "Fury" was a bona fide hit. But all that was easily overshadowed by the much more entertaining Shia LaBeouf Show going on throughout the year in Berlin, L.A. and New York. Whether he was using a paper bag on his head to announce that he's Not Famous Anymore, having staring contests with strangers in art galleries or getting arrested outside Broadway musicals, LaBeouf was tough to ignore.

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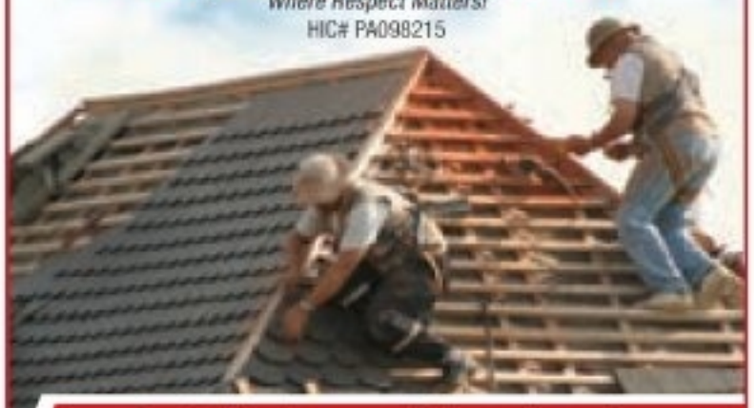

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Office mites

You're unwittingly sharing your workspace with thousands of unwelcome bacteria and more. / WAVEBREAK MEDIA

Keyboard

The worst offender, it tested five times dirtier than a toilet seat.

Desk

Cold and flu viruses can survive from a few hours up to three days on hard surfaces. The norovirus, which can upset the stomach and cause severe diarrhea, survives for up to four weeks.

By the numbers

21,000

Germs per square inch on your desk

Dishes

One in 5 office mugs was found to contain coliform bacteria, which can upset the stomach.

By the numbers

80-90%

How much disinfectants reduce the spread of viruses

Devices

Mobiles and tablets were 400 times dirtier than a toilet seat, and found to harbor all kinds of bugs, including staph.

By the numbers

16

Times an hour the average adult touches his/her nose, mouth or eyes

Clean your desk. As flu season ramps up, we take a look at what may be sharing your cubicle.

Workplaces fester with all sorts of nasty viruses, bacteria and germs. It can take as little as two hours for one stomach flu sufferer to infect half the office, according to the American Society for Microbiology. Metro examines commonly found pathogens and where they lurk.

WANISE MARTINEZ, MWN
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PLUS

Where germs live around the office

Buttons

Elevator, printer, copier, fax machine

Doors

Kitchen cabinets, supply closets, front door, conference room

Kitchen

Over the course of the day, most everyone will touch the coffee pot handle and microwave buttons, two rarely cleaned surfaces.

Light switches

Since they're touched the least, these came out as the "cleanest" with 217 germs per square inch. That said, respiratory viruses can survive for two to four days on them.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR CRITICISM CONSTRUCTIVE

No Insurance Necessary

KIM SCHNEIDERMAN, MSW, LCSW
NOVEL-PERSPECTIVE.COM

Kim Schneiderman's book "Step Out of Your Story: Writing Exercises to Reframe and Transform Your Life," is due to be published in the spring. Email Kim your questions at askkim@metro.us.

This is not the way to get things resolved. / DIGITAL VISION

Lately, I find myself getting frustrated and snapping at my husband when he doesn't listen to me or follow up with things I ask him to do. He gets defensive and says I'm too critical.

You're not alone. Communication is the key to a healthy relationship — and yet, you'd be surprised how many people don't know how to effectively express themselves, especially if they grew up in homes where self-expression wasn't encouraged or the person with the loudest voice always won. Here are some simple ways to use an "I statement" to improve your chances that what you have to say won't fall on deaf ears.

1 Identify the upsetting behavior. The No. 1 mistake people make is attacking a person's character ("you're so lazy") or lobbing accusations ("you don't care") instead of pointing out the specific offending behavior. Not only do such statements put people on the defensive by suggesting that something is wrong with them, but they don't give the person an opportunity to change. Try expressing yourself by starting like this: "When you show up late to dinner and don't call ahead …"

2 Identify the feeling. This may sound simple, but many people can't distinguish thoughts from feelings. So often, when I ask clients how they feel about someone's behavior, they say things like, "I feel that he's lazy," or "I feel that he's selfish." These are judgments that don't help the other person understand what it's like to be on the receiving end of their actions. If you're not sure about what you're feeling, you can always focus on the five basic emotions: mad, sad, bad, glad and afraid. All emotions are an extension or distillation of these fundamental states. Once you've identified the feeling, add it to your sentence: "When you show up late to dinner and don't call ahead, I feel mad."

3 Identify and take ownership of your interpretation of the behavior. This keeps your mind open to the possibility that you may be wrong, which can be a bit tricky because so often we make wrong assumptions about what people's behavior means instead of asking them directly. Such assumptions are usually projections based on fears and old stories. When you own your interpretation, you take responsibility for your reactions, which gives your listener room to reflect on where you're coming from: "When you're late, I get sad and mad. The story I tell myself, which may or may not be true, is that you don't care about my needs or my time [just like my mother did when she came late to pick me up at school]."

4 Make a request for the future. This conveys your faith that change is possible and further clarifies your wishes. "When you come late to dinner, I feel mad. The story I tell myself is that you don't care about my time or want to be with me. In the future, I would like you to please be on time."

The Philadelphia Housing Authority Board of Commissioners will hold its next regularly-scheduled meeting on:

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Time : 3:00 p.m.
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Kelvin A. Jeremiah / PHA President & CEO

Look around

Explore your options

Most important of all, students should remember that there are plenty of fish in the sea when it comes to colleges and universities and that most students eventually do find the right fit. "Life is funny that way," says Caddeau. "You might not realize it, but this is a long journey."

Deferred from your top choice? Here's how to proceed. / WAVEBREAK MEDIA

When your dream school says 'maybe'

Applications. Learn to how cope with a deferral.

Last week was a roller coaster ride of emotions for many high school seniors — as those who applied early decision received the first admission letters of the season.

While it's easy to know what to feel and say when receiving an acceptance or rejection letter, knowing what to do when you get a deferral is much more complicated, as applicants were essentially told "maybe, one day," by their top choice.

"The first thing I tell students that are deferred is try not to take it personally," says Meg Caddeau, an admissions counselor with the educational consulting firm IvyWise. "They have to step back and look at the numbers. Students who are deferred or rejected are in very good company."

Caddeau offers these suggestions for students trying to figure out their next steps.

Spotlight

Stand out from the crowd

As they are revising, Caddeau urges students to spotlight their uniqueness. She had one student who neglected to mention her interest in tech. "Most admissions committees don't see women on computer science teams," she says.

Follow directions

"Each school will have a letter with pretty detailed instructions," Caddeau notes. "Some colleges will ask students to update the admissions committee and sometimes students will have new information to add. However, if they don't say that, I wouldn't go back and add anything."

Show some personality

If you are asked to send a letter updating the admissions committee on your progress, treat it like another opportunity to shine. "I had one student who really infused humor into her letter," Caddeau recalls. "She wrote something like, 'As you suggested, I wanted to update you on my progress. While I haven't found a cure for cancer yet, I was voted most likely to attend Hogwarts by my class.'"

Learn from your mistakes

Throughout her time advising applicants, Caddeau says that sometimes it is clear why a student didn't make the cut. "We see that they didn't present themselves as well as they could have," she notes. "They had boring essays or they were applying to schools that were out of their reach."

In these cases, some self-reflection (and application revisions) are in order. Caddeau urges students to take advantage of the ability to revise their common applications. "They can change their essays, they can make revisions," she says.

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New study

Most teens are sleep-deprived

Are you or someone you know a high school student? If so, chances are that you could use a good nap right now.

A new study out of Columbia University found that a whopping nine out of 10 high schoolers aren't getting enough sleep each night. Only 5 percent of the nation's 12th graders are getting nine to 10 hours of sleep each night, which the recommended amount of rest for adolescents.

The researchers warn that a lack of sleep could have serious and long-term consequences for years to come. "Sleep is essential for the health of the human brain," lead researcher Charles Basch and his colleagues write in the paper, which appears in the journal Preventing Chronic Disease.

"The data show a need for universal interventions — those directed toward all students," the authors continue. "Unfortunately, intervention research directed toward high school populations has received little attention."

LAKSHMI GANDHI

Researchers say teens should be getting at least nine hours of sleep each night. / MOODBOARD

Starting the conversation. A new way to teach teens about relationships and sexual health

Members of Teens P.A.C.T. are trained to be health educators. / PROVIDED

Like many high school girls, Tiffani Grey and her friends often talk about dating and relationships. But Grey, a senior and aspiring pre-med student in New York, says she is often struck by the misinformation out there.

"[My friends] probably ask about birth control the most," Grey says. "They want to know if there are side effects and also if they can get access to it."

Fortunately for these teens, Grey has many of the answers they need. Grey is currently a peer educator at Teens P.A.C.T. (Positive Action and Choices for Teens) — a nonprofit program run by the Community Healthcare Network that teaches teens about safe sex.

The organization just released a series of public service announcements written and produced by its students. "Our goal was to create something using these voices," says Michelle Perlman, Teens P.A.C.T.'s director. The PSAs are currently being distributed to teen websites.

The topics

Teens P.A.C.T.'s new PSAs have the following titles:

- Feel Good Sex
- Condom Class
- Teen Pregnancy

In their own words

Perlman notes that some of the videos may make adults uncomfortable. "They would pick a topic like lack of condom use," Perlman says. "So they would talk about how many teens say that condoms don't feel good and craft these scripts."

Ultimately though, sexual safety is the goal. "Young people are out there engaging in risky behavior," Perlman says. "We want them to engage in behavior that allows them to be safe and healthy."

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Be the star of the company holiday party this year

Networking. Now's your time to shine.

Most important of all, remember to have fun! / DIGITAL VISION

It seems like everyone has a horror story about their workplace's annual Christmas party — you don't have to look far to find tales of drunken bosses or regrettable flirtations. But one expert notes that it's also important not to let those stories distract from the fact that the annual winter gathering is also the perfect time to put your best foot forward in terms of your career.

"It's really one of the most important business days of your year," says Patricia Rossi, an etiquette coach and the author of "Everyday Etiquette: How to Navigate 101 Common and Uncommon Social Situations." "It's the one time of the year you can get to someone higher up in the company that you can't get to normally."

Rossi shares these tips on how junior employees can work the room.

Put on a smile and attend

"The first thing you have to do is go," says Rossi. "The company has invested both time and money in organizing it." And this isn't the occasion to be fashionably late or to just stop by for a few minutes either. "Arrive on time, but don't be the last to leave," Rossi advises.

Don't just talk to your office buddies

"You want to move about the cabin — don't latch onto one person and talk to them all night," says Rossi. For the introverts out there, Rossi says it's also important to remember that almost everyone feels awkward when it comes to holiday parties.

Have conversation topics planned

"Have two or three interesting things to talk about," she advises. "If your company VP is a big donor to the [art museum], that means you know they like art." A little research goes a long way.

LAKSHMI GANDHI
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Small talk

Always talk to the spouses

"Your manager is probably going to be bringing a spouse," notes Rossi. "And the spouse is always nervous about attending these things. But if you talk to them and are engaging, on the ride home, she or he will say, 'Oh, I met your employee and they were so lovely, so nice.'"

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Horoscope

♐ Sagittarius | Nov. 22-Dec. 21. It will be easier to complete projects if you work alone. Asking questions will lead to interference.

♑ Capricorn | Dec. 22-Jan. 20. Trust in your judgment. You will not feel satisfied if you try to live up to someone else's expectations. Reconsider past choices.

♒ Aquarius | Jan. 21-Feb. 18. Money will come to you from an unusual source. Your knowledge will be instrumental in helping someone get a project off the ground.

♓ Pisces | Feb. 19-March 20. Resist the temptation to get romantically involved with a co-worker. Relationship woes could lead to a costly mistake.

♈ Aries | March 21-April 20. You will regret it if you become involved with someone or something inappropriate. Keep your goals in sight and stay focused on getting ahead.

♉ Taurus | April 21-May 21. Your romantic life is heating up. Trying something out of the ordinary will introduce you to a fascinating new group or connection.

♊ Gemini | May 22-June 20. A beneficial change to your career is imminent. Potential professional partners will want to find out more about your ideas.

♋ Cancer | June 21-July 22. Keep your cool. Your position in the workplace may be at risk if you have a falling out with a colleague. Look into different ways to increase your cash flow.

♌ Leo | July 23-Aug. 22. A neighbor will provide the final piece of a puzzle that you've been trying to solve with regard to a new venture.

♍ Virgo | Aug. 23-Sept. 22. If you are apologizing for or constantly defending someone close to you, it may be time to reassess the relationship.

♎ Libra | Sept. 23-Oct. 22. Your creativity will be magnified today, and new ideas must not be disregarded. Approach projects imaginatively. Find better ways to reach your goals.

♏ Scorpio | Oct. 23-Nov. 21. Try something new. Use your unique talents to make vocational changes. Follow your heart and let your skills speak for you. EUGENIA LAST

Sudoku: Easy and hard

8	4	7						3
1		6	7	5	9		8	
		5						
6	7			9				
			3	4	6			
				8			3	9
						2		
	6		2	7	4	3		8
3						9	7	1

6		1	9			2		
		9					5	
7	2				4			8
				5		3	2	
		2	3		9	8		
	7	3		4				
4			2				9	1
	1					4		
		6			1	7		3

How to play
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Letters

Tragedy no excuse for barbarism

Re: 'For some 9/11 families, torture not a gray area' (Metro New York, Dec. 12-14; Metro .us) The article deeply saddens me. Almost 60 years ago, my immigrant grandfather died of injuries sustained in a robbery of his grocery store in Greenwich Village. Suspects were never identified, despite efforts of the NYPD. Nonetheless, I am a lifelong opponent of capital punishment and a staunch advocate of fair and humane law enforcement. While my family's misfortune cannot compare to 9/11, those of us who have suffered crime would do well to uphold nobler principles.
RUTH CONNER, VIA EMAIL

Terrible treatment

Re: 'Lay blame where it's due' (Metro, Dec. 11) Letter writer Delores Paulk is spot-on regarding police violence and the mistreatment of blacks. It is sad when one can predict the outcome of a police encounter based on the race of the civilian. The disparate treatment of blacks by police is reprehensible and should be decried by all law-abiding citizens. It is also a travesty of justice when prosecutors who are tasked with bringing an indictment against thug cops act as defense attorneys instead.
CAROLYN CASEY, VIA EMAIL

letters@metro.us

Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact info.

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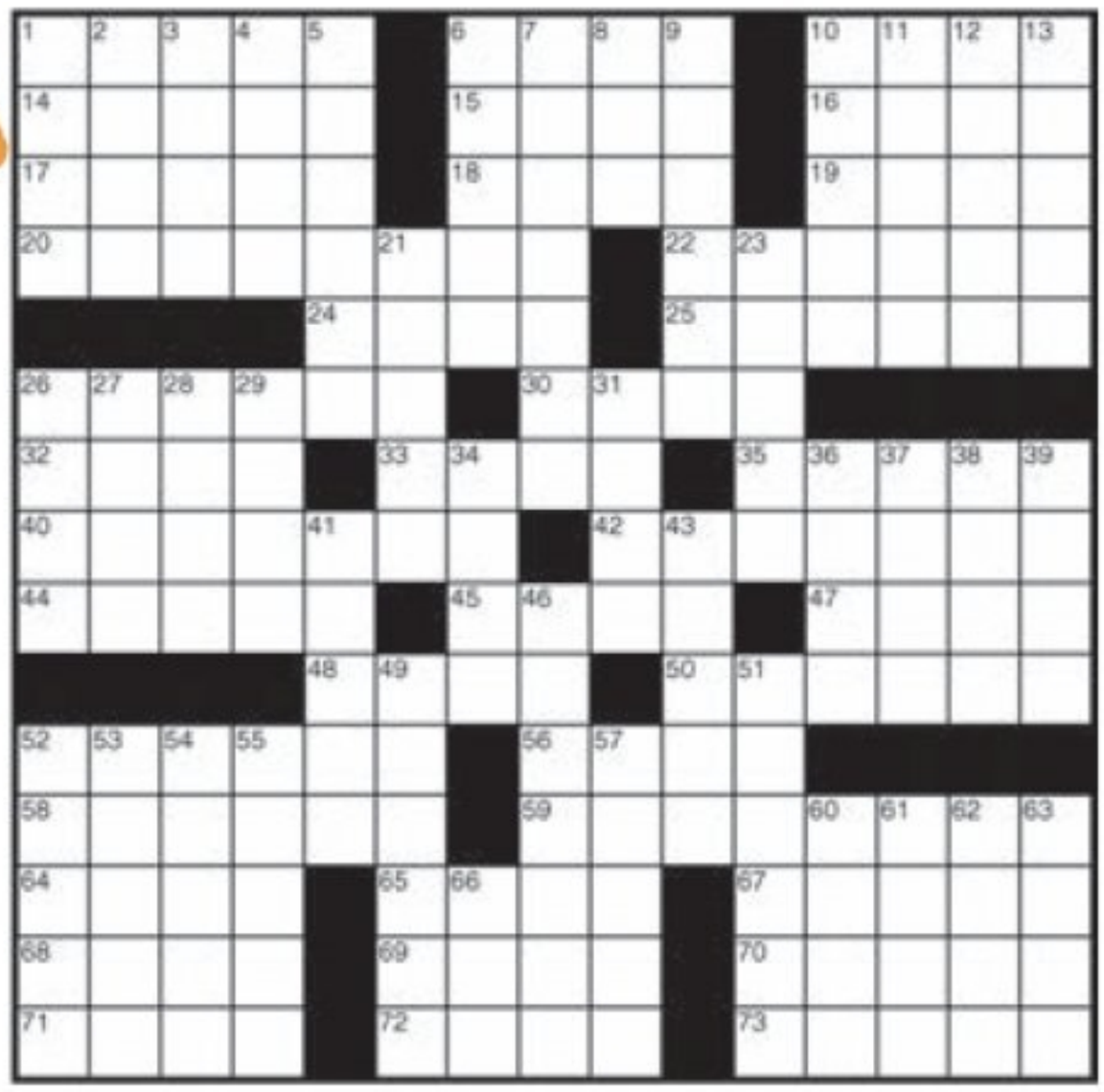
Use your smartphone to find today's crossword answers! Download and open the Blippar app on your smartphone and hold the screen over the puzzle.

Crossword

Across
1 Hot soaks
6 Netting
10 Mallard cousin
14 Ear-oriented
15 Pentathlon event
16 Unfounded, as rumors
17 Pasture entrance
18 Costa —
19 Pier foundation
20 Walked (2 wds.)
22 Eagle or hawk
24 Nix
25 Rendezvous
26 Speed along
30 Pyramid builder
32 Kind of rug
33 Were rivals
35 Mr. Yeltsin
40 Split up
42 Scuba diver's dive
44 Inches forward
45 Adamson's pal
47 Trillion, in combos
48 Crowning point
50 Subcontractor
52 Crude
56 Hole-making tools
58 This instant (2 wds.)
59 Lets go by, as a chance (2 wds.)
64 Sax-playing Simpson
65 Not mention
67 Steamed
68 Coats cupcakes
69 Like Tonto's friend
70 Hearths' contents
71 Track event
72 Amtrak driver
73 Bread ingredient

Down
1 Wingding
2 Parking lot sight
3 Quartet minus one
4 — nelson
5 Kimono part
6 Earn
7 Typical example
8 Wine category
9 Substantial, as a meal
10 Unstable
11 Revises
12 Parcel out
13 Knowing looks
21 Dig deep
23 Haik wearers
26 Invited
27 Soprano's number
28 Races the engine
29 Go wild about
31 Explains further
34 Footnote word
36 VIII, to Virgil
37 Coral habitat
38 About, in memos (2 wds.)
39 Galaxy unit
41 Asimov of sci-fi
43 Titles like Tarzan's
46 "Ten lords a- — ..."
49 Bayou dweller
51 Become inflexible
52 Well-founded
53 Carthage neighbor
54 Mislays
55 Grind one's teeth
57 Tend the ferns
60 A Great Lake
61 Mystery writer — Paretsky
62 Sporty trucks
63 Nosy neighbor
66 Dude, Jamaica-style

Yesterday's answer



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Wildcats rout Owls in Big 5 showdown

NCAA. Villanova remains undefeated after Josh Hart and the Wildcats' offense put on a show Sunday.

Villanova put on a three-point shooting barrage on Sunday, routing the Temple Owls 85-62.

The seventh-ranked Wildcats (10-0) shot 9-of-15 from the outside (60%), and the Owls (6-4) couldn't find an answer all afternoon.

Josh Hart and Darrun Hilliard II led the charge for Villanova, combining for 40 points on 12-of-14 (85%) shooting. Hart credited his teammates on the big day.

"Our guys, they did a good job of finding me, and I just took open shots," Hart said. "The shots happened to fall … it was a good day."

The Wildcats will remain nationally ranked in the top seven and could jump a spot or two after Sunday's win. / GETTY IMAGES

Older and wiser

Villanova head coach Jay Wright won't be letting his team get too high on themselves after their dominating performance.

- "I think things are cyclical," the coach said. "We have older guys, I think we've just got two years here where we have older guys and the other teams are younger, I think that makes a big difference in college basketball."

The win puts Villanova at 3-0 in Big 5 games this year and sole possession of the Big 5 title. Temple dropped to 1-2.

The Wildcats led by as many as 24 in the second half, but Temple was able to cut it to as few as 13 at the 4:39 to play.

Villanova clawed that lead back to 23 thanks to clamping down defensively. They held the Owls to just 34.6 percent shooting (18-of-52) from the floor.

"Good win for us against a tough team," Villanova head coach Jay Wright said. "They're just getting better and better and better each game, we knew we were going to see a better team tonight and that's why I'm proud of how we played."

Villanova next faces former Big East rival Syracuse at the Wells Fargo Center Saturday afternoon at 1 p.m.

JEFF MCMENAMIN
@Jeff_McMenamin
sports@metro.us

NCAA. Villanova football sees season end without its star QB

"It's just a game and it's his head."

That, according to Andy Talley, is the bottom line justifying why John Robertson, who may well win the prestigious Walter Payton Award as the top player in the FCS, didn't play in Villanova's season ending FCS quarterfinal 34-31 loss to visiting Sam Houston State Saturday.

No matter what the stakes, the longtime Wildcats' coach, would never put a kid at risk — even one as talented as Robertson, who'd thrown for 2,846 yards and 35 touchdowns while rushing for 1078 yards and 11 scores.

So when Robertson informed him following morning mass he couldn't go due to the concussion he suffered last week, Talley never hesitated turning to senior Chris Polony. And Polony nearly pulled off the victory, throwing for 228 yards and a touchdown, running for 87 and two more scores.

Would a healthy Robertson have made the difference? We'll never know. But had the defense done its job, particularly after Polony's 1-yard run gave the 'Cats a 31-27 lead with 7:15 left, the Wildcats might be the ones preparing to take on three-time defending champ North Dakota State rather than Sam Houston.

A decade or so ago chances are Robertson would've still buckled up his chinstrap and tried to gut it out. Things have changed since then.

"You worry about long-term effects," said Talley, whose club missed a possible potential 51-yard field goal attempt to send the game to overtime. "There is so much now with concussion issues that everyone is much more concerned about that kind of thing. But I like the protocol. It takes everybody off the hook and it's safe for the kid."

That put the game in the hands of Polony, who started way back as a freshman, before giving way to Robertson his sophomore season.

"It was awesome to see him step in like that and John was very supportive of him," said senior running back Kevin Monangai. "I was just happy with the overall offensive performance. We are just proud of the way we took this program from 2-9 when we first came in to what it is now. We would've liked to have gone further, but that's the way things go sometimes."

They're all still healthy, which is what matters most. After all, it's just a game.

JON MARKS

John Robertson and the Wildcats ended their 2014 season on a sour note. / VILLANOVA ATHLETICS

Quoted

"Someone always has to have a broken heart at the end of these games. It's time to look at the positive things. We were an overachieving team that won 11 games and I have no complaints."

Villanova head coach Andy Talley

3 SPORTS

NBA

76ers set to host Boston

The Sixers nearly shocked the NBA Saturday night when they led the Memphis Grizzlies, the team with the second best record in the NBA by 18 points in the fourth quarter. But they team couldn't combat Mike Conley and a ferocious Memphis attack late in the game and remains three games behind the Knicks for the NBA's worst record. Monday night Philly could climb out of their hole against the 7-14 Celtics. The game is the second of three straight this week at the Wells Fargo Center.

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The Packers still have work to do after their upset loss Sunday as nothing has been decided in the NFC North yet. / GETTY IMAGES

Packers shocked by Bills, Patriots clinch

NFL. Aaron Rodgers has three turnovers in stunning Week 15 upset loss while several teams clinch playoff spots.

Buffalo pulled off a shocking 21-13 victory Sunday thanks to two Aaron Rodgers interceptions (both by Bacarri Rambo) and a Marcus Thigpen 75-yard punt return. Rodgers also coughed up a fumble that would result in a costly safety with 1:51 remaining.

Patriots 41, Dolphins 13
The Patriots (11-3) clinched their sixth straight AFC East title by thumping the Dolphins (7-7). Duron Harmon and Patrick Chung each picked off Ryan Tannehill, who was held in check by the New England defense.

Colts 17, Texans 10
Andrew Luck led the Colts to their second straight AFC South title (10-4) overcoming an early Texans lead and 99 yards from Arian Foster. Both defenses shone bright as neither team eclipsed 290 total yards of offense.

Giants 24, Redskins 13
Odell Beckham Jr. continued his stellar play, hauling in 12 receptions for 143 yards and three touchdowns. Eli Manning came along for the joyride completing 23-of-34 passes for 250 yards while posting a 118.5 QB rating.

Steelers 27, Falcons 20
Ben Roethlisberger had his way with the Atlanta secondary at the Georgia Dome, throwing for 360 yards. While Le'Veon Bell had only 47 yards on 20 carries, he did find the end zone twice for the 9-5 Steelers.

Ravens 20, Jaguars 12
Baltimore (9-5) remains in the thick of things after they earned a needed win over Jacksonville in Week 15. The Ravens netted just 31 yards rising through three quarters but relied on their defense to keep the Jaguars out of the end zone and to four field goals.

Panthers 19, Bucs 17
Carolina didn't have Cam Newton but it didn't matter, as Derek Anderson (277 passing yards and a TD) led the Panthers to their fifth win. At 5-8-1, Carolina is still alive for a playoff berth in the lackluster NFC South.

Cincinnati 30, Cleveland 0
Not much could have gone worse in Johnny Manziel's NFL debut, as the rookie threw for just 80 yards and two interceptions in a blowout loss to their rivals. For the Bengals, Jeremy Hill ran for 148 yards and two scores as they improved to 9-4-1 on the year.

Chiefs 31, Raiders 13
The Chiefs (8-6) remained in the AFC playoff picture, dismissing the Raiders (2-12). Kansas City separated itself from Oakland in the third quarter with three touchdowns as Knile Davis had a rushing and receiving score and Travis Kelce had a TD grab.

MATT BURKE
and EVAN MACY

Around the NFL

Late afternoon scores:

- **Jets 16, Titans 11:** Chris Johnson ran for 55 yards on his former team and Chris Ivory scored the winning touchdown for New York.
- **Broncos 22, Chargers 10:** Demaryius Thomas caught six Peyton Manning passes for 123 yards and a touchdown as the Broncos improved to 11-3 and kept pace with New England in the race for the No. 1 seed in the AFC.
- **Seahawks 17, 49ers 7:** The Seahawks shutout the 49ers in the second half and running back Marshawn Lynch rushed for 91 yards and a touchdown.
- **Lions 16, Vikings 14:** Detroit kicker Matt Prater scored the only points of the second half for either team as the Lions improved to 10-4.

Visit **Metro.us** to read about the Eagles-Cowboys prime time battle.

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First of many

Laughton overjoyed after first goal

You always remember your first.

Flyers prospect Scott Laughton has been making his mark with the NHL club, and is looking more and more like the forward of the future Philly is hoping for.

After scoring with frequency in the AHL, Laughton took a little time in the big leagues to net his first goal, but that doesn't mean he hasn't been impressing head coach Craig Berube.

"He's a hard worker," the coach said of the rookie. "He skates really well, but his effort is very noticeable for sure. His teammates like it. I mean obviously how can you not, I mean he goes out there, works hard every shift and gives you everything he's got."

The NHL's leading scorer Jakub Voracek couldn't help but smile after his young teammate reached a milestone Saturday night in a 5-1 win over Carolina.

"It's something that he will never forget," Voracek said. "I'm very happy for him. He's been playing some great hockey since he got called up. It was really good to see him finally get that first one and hopefully there are going to be many more to come." EVAN MACY

Flyers receive a spark from secondary scoring

NHL. The Flyers won back-to-back games for the first time in a while, and are finally playing like a playoff hockey team.

The more help young offensive players like Laughton can give the Flyers' top line, the better. / GETTY IMAGES

There are a myriad of reasons why the Philadelphia Flyers are 3-0-2 in their last five games, have rebounded from their recent 1-8-2 stretch and won consecutive games for the first time since a three-game streak in the first week of November.

For instance, between Steve Mason and Ray Emory they have received stellar goaltending that has not only kept them in games, but stolen points in the process.

Jumping out to a lead in the first period in five of their last six games, they have temporarily shed their slow-start label. They have taken 2-0 leads in their last two games, and when they initially did so on Thursday against the Devils it was the first time in 15 games.

And with a win over the defending champion Kings on the road and garnering a point in five straight contests, the Flyers have finally regained some confidence and swagger.

While all of the aforementioned reasons have been keys, none are bigger than the secondary scoring the Flyers have gotten from the second and third lines.

After Claude Giroux and Jakub Voracek carried the offense for weeks, 16 of the last 20 goals have been scored by players other than the two forwards.

"A lot more guys are starting to contribute offensively now and it's helping," Wayne Simmonds said. "It's definitely helping."

Simmonds has been one of the biggest contributors. He's tallied five goals in as many games and leads the club with 13.

Sean Couturier has three goals and four assists in the last six games to complement his defensive game.

R.J. Umberger and Matt Read ended double-digit game scoring droughts, and even rookie Scott Laughton joined the mix with his first NHL marker during Saturday's win over the Hurricanes.

"I don't think a lot of the guys were shooting the puck, and everyone's starting to shoot the puck now," Simmonds said. "When you have shots on net, you're going to get a lot of second and third opportunities and that's when you're going to score … I think that's happening now."

It's taken the burden off Giroux and Voracek, who still both rank in the top six in the league in points heading into Sunday's action, and helped balance out the lineup.

"I really believe it's because we are playing as a team," said Giroux. "I think when we are all on the same page, it makes everybody's job a lot easier."

Quoted

"I think the biggest thing is that we have a ton of talent in here and guys that can play and play with the puck." Flyers' defenseman Nick Schultz

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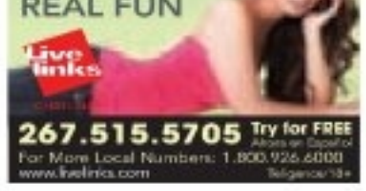

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